



... creating a better quality of life

September 15, 2015

Ms. Marlene H. Dortch
Secretary
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Promoting Innovation and Competition in the Provision of Multichannel Video Programming
Distribution Services (DN 14-261)

Madame Secretary:

The City of Murfreesboro, TN is home to 39,000 cable subscribers. Our City has granted a cable franchise to Comcast. In exchange for the right to use and semi-permanently occupy our publicly maintained public rights-of-way, our cable company partner pays cable franchise fees and support our community media efforts through the offering of educational and governmental channels.

In the City of Murfreesboro, TN we use these cable franchise fees to create local government programming that provides vital information about our local government and community that is not available from regional broadcasters or national media companies. Our institutional network (I-Net) is also supported by Comcast, and we use our I-Net to provide broadband service to our public schools, libraries, fire and police stations, and other government institutions/buildings. Cable franchise fees also support our efforts to provide assistance to consumers as they seek to resolve service and billing complaints with our franchised cable service provider as no other governmental entity at the federal or state level offers such services.

- The City of Murfreesboro, TN supports the Commission's conclusion that the Cable Act's "definition of 'cable service' includes linear IP video service" and that "merely using IP to deliver cable service "does not alter the classification of a facility as a cable system or of an entity as a cable operator."¹ As Blueriddle CBA stated, adopting IP or any other technology does not transform cable service or cable systems, similar to the way that switching from analog to digital technology did not transform cable service or cable system into something else.²
- The City of Murfreesboro, TN supports the Comments of NATOA, ACM, San Antonio, and Anne Arundel County, that if the Commission opts to expand the definition of an MVPD, all MVPDs should have comparable obligations – including obligations to carry local public, educational, government (PEG) community programming. *These local PEG channels are also a primary source of emergency alert information for elderly and low income residents, who for a variety of reasons, are low adopters of alternative*

¹ Notice of Proposed Rulemakings, MB Docket No. 14-261, FCC 14-210 (Dec. 19, 2014)(“NPRM”) ¶ 72.

² Blueriddle CBA p. 32.

forms of communication, such as Twitter and other social media. We also support the comments of NAB to the extent that they highlight the importance of Congressional and Commission actions and policies to foster the provision of local news and information, and the importance of addressing the obligations of being an MVPD in totality with the benefits of being an MVPD.³

- The City of Murfreesboro, TN does not support the Commission's tentative conclusion that over the top (OTT) video service offered by cable operators should not be regulated as a cable service.⁴ We believe OTT video service offered by cable operators is a cable service and should be regulated as a cable service. Local governments and Congress have worked for years to have cable operators offer lower cost packages for subscribers. Nothing prevents cable operators from offering lower cost cable packages using current technology. To have the Commission arbitrarily assert that cable operators should be relieved of important public interest obligations merely by opting to use alternative technology to deliver the same video programming, puts the Commission in the position of creating incentives to undercut franchise obligations for no public or consumer purpose. The video programming would be delivered over the same closed-transmission-path facilities⁵.

The City of Murfreesboro, TN urges the Commission that as it seeks to promote competition in the delivery of video entertainment that it not undercut the numerous public benefits that are captured by the current MVPD and cable franchising regime.

Sincerely,



Shane McFarland
Mayor

³ NAB p. 16.

⁴ NPRM ¶ 78.

⁵ In addition, as noted by Discovery Communications and the Electronic Frontier Foundation. (Discovery Communications p. 10-13; EFF p. 5-6.), reclassifying cable service as something else jeopardizes customer service, privacy, and accessibility protections. If the Commission classifies OTT offered by a cable operator as something that's not a cable service, then an OTT-cable subscriber would not have – *even though they are viewing the same liner video programming offered by the same cable operator, the protections they have traditionally enjoyed.*